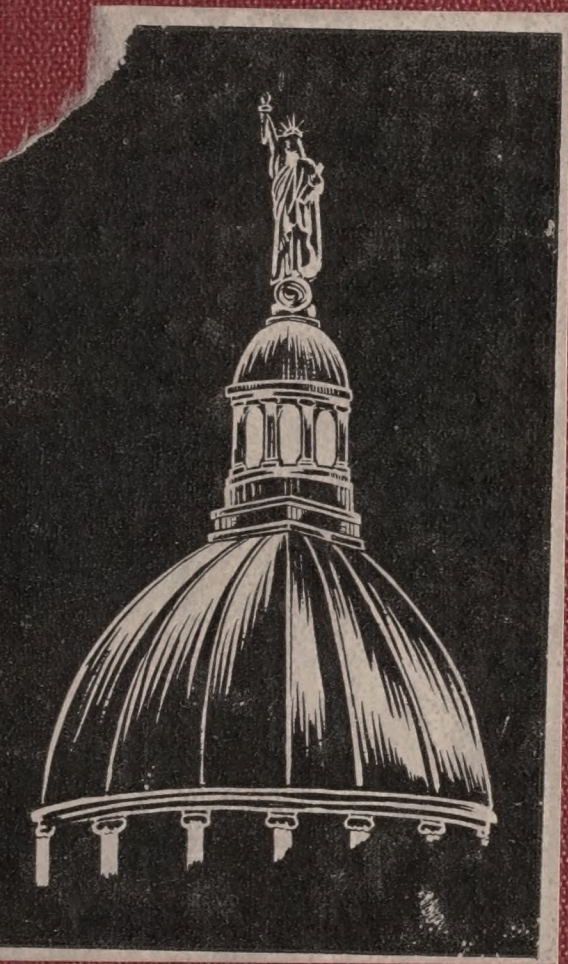


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The State's Scandal.



CARL FRANKLIN HUTCHESON



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DEDICATION

First, I commemorate this book to my goodly sire, Leander Bradley Hutcheson, now at home with God. Despite my faults, he believed in me and saw only the best. I loved him with deserved reverence.

Second, I dedicate this volume to my sincere friend and benefactor, Thomas Brailsford Felder. He is one of Georgia's knightliest sons. His mind teems with brilliance, his soul pulsates with generosity; his life is one of unsullied honor.

CARL FRANKLIN HUTCHESON.

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1973

THE STATE'S SCANDAL—DESTINY OR FATE?

Readers and thinkers, and those who seek facts are most vitally interested in current events.

Affairs, personages and incidents close at hand are more desirous than things purely fictional. In this story, the author has recited various actual happenings. He has endeavored to picture romance, struggle and achievement, together with political strategy, really effected. The entire vehicle deals with Municipal and State manipulations.

More Truth than imagination is conveyed. In this book, corruption is shown to have weaved its course, Satanic-like, beneath a skein of respectability. When the veil is snatched from its fastenings, Hypocrisy and Treachery are disclosed, and the Nakedness of Truth speaks boldly—the Machinations of dishonest methods and men are exposed.



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CHAPTER I

THAT'S a damn'd outrage! Politics of that sort must cease in this City!"

Half muttered, half hissed, were these emphatic words that issued from the lips of a young and determined lawyer, as he stood back of the rail of the Council Chamber at the City Hall. He was observing with penetrating eye, the chuckling of a crowd of petty and conniving politicians who had just defeated a clean and able man for General Manager of Parks, to place a member of the Ring in office.

"Who is the young man in the gray coat? He appears to be one of destiny or fate," remarked Harold Raymond, one of the City's wealthy young citizens, as he pointed out the lawyer to his five companions. They, too, had gone there to watch the ma-

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chinery of the Ring, and to learn just how their friend would be laid upon the block and slaughtered. Raymond had overheard the attorney's declaration, and immediately became interested in the latter.

"Jack Townbridge. A good fighter he is, with an ample supply of gray matter to back him up," came an immediate response from one of the City Hall's brightest newspaper men—Dan Cragg. The reporter was standing offside from the group addressed by Raymond.

Cragg added, "He can start more, go to the core of things with more precision and facts to substantiate charges than any man of his age in this town. And he has the boys with him too. He tells the truth with gloves off, and is never afraid to unearth and expose corruption. If he was not financially embarrassed, you would see that young fellow amount to something before twelve months have passed."

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Raymond was intensely interested. Although wealthy, he stood for fair play and justice, and a clean municipal government, free from graft, greed and small politics. "I wonder if he would accept a lift, so that he could clean out the dirtiness at the City Hall? We young fellows need a leader here, and I am inclined to believe Townbridge is the one to accomplish just what we wish. You are connected with the Chronicle. You know politics, and should be able to answer my question."

Cragg thought for a moment. He replied that it was his belief, that Townbridge would spurn financial aid on account of his pride and independence, and his opinion that every man should bear his own burden. However, he would consult the attorney if such was the desire, and let Raymond know. Before Cragg and Raymond discontinued their conversation, the entire group were aroused over the proposition.

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They were indignant at the manner in which their friend had been foot-balled from office, and without cause. All promised untiring and generous aid, if Townbridge could be induced to begin the fight. They were anxious for a young man's regime to conduct a clean and unquestioned administration.

Townbridge, unaware that he was the subject of discussion, and not dreaming that his cause had become that of others nearby, repaired to his office. He closed the library door, and spent much time constructing a method by which, what he had witnessed that afternoon, could be eliminated. While in the Council Chamber, he stood aloof from others, as was his custom when carefully studying a situation. Alone and undisturbed, he lighted his pipe and allowed his mind free rein, as he stared through curls of rising smoke.

A somber and serious frame of mind

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brought furrows to his brow. He mumbled to himself, "This political machine shall be bursted into a thousand atoms, if I am compelled to do it myself." His well set jaws were vice gripped. The aquiline nose disclosed the fearlessness of an American Indian. The deep dark brown eyes, searching in glance, manifested determined grasp. During the hours of meditation, with no companion except his pipe, Townbridge reflected at length.

Providence seemed not to have dealt kindly with him for a few years. A large number of the police force, and especially the officials, were aggrieved with him. His exposure of them had brought to light the fact, that patrolmen and detectives were winking at vice conditions in the City. Out of his charges, evidential facts were brought to light which caused expulsion of several officers. By reason of the preferred charges, the County grand jury held

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a long and tedious session, in which many indictments were returned. Prosecutions and convictions followed.

Some time prior to this uproar in civic conditions, through Townbridge's leadership and counsel, a Circuit Court Judge, whose office had been given to him through trickery and fraud, was prevented from taking his seat on the bench, by action of the State Executive Committee. His first real prominence in State and party politics came, when he waged a telling campaign to satisfy the aspirations of one of his boyhood friends, who desired to become a member of the United States Congress. His friend was landed safely in the Lower House of Representatives at Washington by an overwhelming majority. This had been a fight against political corruption against the former incumbent. Townbridge's management created great surprise to the entire State and South.

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Enemies were legion in all corners against the rising young member of the bar. During the police investigation, his life was threatened and imperiled. At every crook and turn of his daily duties, he was trailed by sleuths, whose lynx-eyes, were ever awake to find something of damage against their Nemesis, but their efforts were futile. With reputation in jeopardy, and a target for all manner of criticism hurled at him with volcanic force, young Townbridge stood his ground with Napoleonic defiance and perfect composure. No onslaughts ever deterred him for one moment in prosecuting his purposes.

Already a veteran at the bar and in public life, all his battles had been for others, and never for himself. He had risen from a newsboy on the streets of his native heath, where he then was, and which he loved with all his life's blood. He began starring in contests from the cradle, and

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by great energy and close application, had worked himself through school and college.

So-called friends, he had tried and found them lacking in sincerity. A shroud of gloom held canopy over him. He was somewhat disappointed with the world and mankind. Regardless of the kind heart which possessed him, and his charitable traits, his attitude had become sarcastic. A scowl was often discovered with his smile. Yet, he had the highest regard for honor and integrity, and his spirit of combat had not deserted him.

Townbridge threw off his reflections, left his office and went to his apartment, where he delved anxiously into his library. He had made up his mind. A fight against the crowd at the City Hall should be made to uncover the dirty politics which were played there. As yet, no means by which to realize his purpose had been found, but he decided it should be done, and he would lead the way.

CAPTER II

WEEKS had passed since Townbridge had determined to enter the clean-out battle. He had consulted no one, but had been moodily planning, waiting and watching for an opportunity to throw the spot-light upon the corruption of the City. He would secure convicting evidence. To strike a death blow to those who were deceiving THE PEOPLE, was uppermost in his mind. Walking down Broadway, he was attracted by huge head lines of a night extra which read, "COL. JONATHAN BREWER TRAPPED BY DICTAPHONE!"

Brewer was a personal friend, and one in whom the young lawyer had the utmost confidence as to integrity, honor and ability. Purchasing a paper, and hurriedly

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perusing the contents of the story, Townbridge declared to himself, "That is a lie, and I am going to expose that crowd of detectives and policemen, who are protecting vice. The police department is a rotten bunch!" And our champion immediately busied himself, to exonerate his friend, with all might and soul.

Officers on the force who were friendly, were interviewed by him. He found to his utter amazement, that the City was a seething mill of vice. Gambling hells were running riot and houses of ill-fame had taken possession of the community for gain. The officers were receiving bonuses from every protected place, which sent souls to destruction. He discovered, that practically every detective and patrolman knew of the vicious conditions, but failed and refused, to make arrests and to report conditions to their superior officers.

Personal investigations were made by

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Townbridge. He traveled incognito at nights about the City. Affidavits were secured, and he boldly charged the departments with inefficiency, and with knowledge of the flagrant and bold violations of the laws of the City and State.

He alleged connivance of individuals, proprietors and officers. He heralded this through the press. His charges and allegations were countercharged by the defendants. After weeks of great trouble and accumulation of voluminous evidence, which the redoubtable attorney had procured, he was called before the Grand Jury of the County.

To that body, he revealed startling information. His announcements threw high powered bombs into the camps of the enemy. To the consternation of the Grand Jurors, some of themselves were disqualified to pass sentence upon some matters brought to their attention. The jury be-

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came lukewarm when they learned the facts in possession of Townbridge. They were very careful to avoid indictments, that would soil any member of that austere body, who were sworn to act fearlessly and without favor in the premises.

This ARM OF THE LAW, remained in session for one month. Each day, Townbridge kept two messengers busy conveying data to those prominent men who failed in their duty. Townbridge whipped into line almost every indictment that was secured by that spineless body.

They passed sentence upon the helpless little fellows, but dared not question the influential and powerful. Some action was requisite, as the young attorney had the goods, and more so, he had delivered them. They feared further, exposure of themselves.

Whitewash brushes were placed in service in every instance where they could be

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handled by the Jury. Much of the investigation, proved to be lacking in moral force, and was farcical to an extreme. The people of the City were excited with interest, and watched the press daily and hourly for added revelations. Townbridge was proclaimed the standard-bearer of every citizen who had respect for the LAW, ORDER, and a clean form of government. He was not to be trifled with, and was determined. Nothing halted his efforts.

Townbridge came in for criticism on all sides. Life long friends leered at him as he passed them on the streets, and gave disapproval of his search-light methods which seemed to thrust their gleams into every vicious nook and corner in the great City. They trembled, lest their turn of exposure should come next. He was threatened daily by anonymous letters and telephone calls, but nothing disturbed him. He laughed at every effort made to thwart him in his

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fight to gouge the very vitals of the trouble—especially the police department.

“Cragg, I wish to see you at my office at an early date. I desire you to do some work for me in this crusade which I have begun against this rottenness. You can aid me greatly.” Townbridge had not seen the newspaper reporter for some while, but he knew, that Cragg was with him, as every charge made by the lawyer, had received fair and prominent publication in the Chronicle for which the former worked. Also, they were personal friends.

Cragg agreed to see the young member of the bar at the first opportunity. He had great confidence in Townbridge, and also felt that the trip would mean a good story, and a scoop as interest.

CHAPTER III

THERE was nothing narrow about Townbridge. He was clean and despised corruption. He did not regard the City as any better, nor any worse, than any other municipality of its size. And of all things, he believed in a square deal.

A few days after he had talked to Cragg, and while in the midst of work in his office, Townbridge was visited by Raymond. After introduction of themselves, Raymond remarked, "Mr. Townbridge, I am interested in this fight which you are making against the evils of our City. I wish to lend my aid in whatever manner that you may suggest or dictate."

The lawyer eyed him quizzically, and with much precaution. This was noted with alertness by Raymond, who gave his assur-

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ance, that he was with him to the end. He was anxious to see the attorney come out entirely the victor.

With abrupt candor, Townbridge replied, "In what manner do you suggest? Men are very deceptive these days, and I do not wish any espionage in my camp, which at present, consists solely of myself. It is my intention, not to let up on these crooks until I have exposed every rascally one of them, and have convinced the public. Give me your plans, as I am open to suggestions from any one, whether I see fit to utilize them or not."

"I am certain," Raymond came back at him, "that you need financial aid. You should employ several out of town private detectives, to run down every particle of evidence you can secure, and to fine-tooth-comb the entire City. Every detective and patrolman, and every officer, whether your friend or not, should have his private life,

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his haunts and habits investigated. All this should be placed before you, and filed in tabulated form. You understand, this will require a goodly sum of money. I am at your service with a substantial donation. What say you?"

"Mr. Raymond, I thank you for your proffer of services, but I will ask you to allow me to consider your proposition. I will make my answer within a few days."

"Fair enough Mr. Townbridge. You can reach me over my telephone. Good-day." With that farewell and short conference, Raymond, being greatly impressed with the young fighter's attitude and unleashed expression, and thorough business-like manner, departed.

In the meantime, Townbridge decided that he would take Cragg into his confidence as to Raymond's intentions and motives. He would have him learn everything possible about the young capitalist, as he did not intend to walk into anyone's trap.

CHAPTER IV

OW'S that physician's bill stand now before the House? The Senate is safe. No trouble there. That body is fixed." These were questions and assertions poured forth by Dr. Charles Blackman, prominent physician and surgeon, who was pushing a bill through the Legislature. His bill was backed by himself and other influential members of his profession, he being the headsman of the "Third House" steering committee.

Dr. Blackman was one of those selfish men of ability, whose suave and polished manners, together with his cunning, had always afforded him a reputation unblemished. His manner was ever unoffending and quiet, yet calculating for his own aggrandizement, even at the sacrifice of others.

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With warranty to establish his pre-eminent ability, Dr. Blackman's conceit was great, but manifest in a manner, that failed to so impress the world that he had this trait in his makeup. Only those nearest him, and who had studied his characteristics from a fearless and cold blooded viewpoint, were able to easily discover his colossal regard for self. This man, although greatly devoted to his family, was as cold-eyed as a fish, as sneakish as an imp, and possessed of a flint-like heart.

The party addressed, was a lobbyist, who received enormous pay for shoving through legislation. His name was John Chessfield. He was strictly a corporation attorney, and received large fees, more for his work influencing legislation, than for his legal acumen.

"Doctor, the bill, I believe, will pass," responded Chessfield. The great trouble that we are encountering now, is that many

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House members declare the bill undemocratic, confiscatory of power and concentration of control into the hands of eight members of your line of practice, known as "regulars," as against two, known as "irregulars." The former, greatly outreach the latter on the State Board."

"But they should understand the merits of the regulars against the demerits of the irregulars."

"And Doctor, you don't understand a bunch of weak-kneed politicians, who are afraid of their shadows. If their constituency desired the passage of the pending bill, nothing short of hell could deter them from supporting it. As a matter of fact, that bill is brazenly undemocratic, and is too plainly manifest of its onesidedness, and I may add, unfairness." This declaration by Chessfield was accompanied with smothered laughter, but it rang with truth.

"Look here Chessfield," said Blackman to

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the lobbyist, "we must bring one of our own County's representatives to our side. I understand that Jameson is stubborn, and may fight us."

"You are correct Doctor, and I can not learn who has any influence with him. In fact, I do not know how to reach him. He certainly is not corruptible, and speaks his convictions. Being one of the leaders of the House, his opposition would defeat the bill. Jameson must be brought to see the wisdom of its passage."

Chessfield had been listening intently to the physician, who was the real marksman behind the gun, which was to shoot this pernicious bill through the Legislature. Chessfield was the Lieutenant Commander of the underlings, who did his biddings—many of them almost unconsciously.


He was in deep study. Suddenly he conjectured, "Doctor, I must employ a certain man to see every member of the House, and

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learn where each stands. He must weld our chain of support, wherever he can strengthen a weak link. I have a good one who will perform these duties for twenty dollars per week. Of course, he will be doing other things for other persons than ourselves. Then, I have selected a member from this County, who will learn how every member feels. He offers to do this job for One Hundred Dollars. Of course, he being informed of the bill's merits, will do what he can with various opposing members. At nights, I will keep in touch with members of the House and Senate at the Club. This means liquor expenses."

"Go your route, Chessfield," replied the physician. "You make the arrangement, and I will give you a check for whatever you spend. Keep me in touch each day."

CHAPTER V

 R. Blackman was exceedingly wealthy. His income from a large and lucrative practice, poured thousands annually into his coffers. His home was a palace located on the most fashionable boulevard in the City. His surroundings were luxurious and resplendent.

Rising, from an obscure boy, with no earthly means and influence, he had reached the goal of great success. This was accompanied by selfishness. Like many other successful men, who had risen from lowliness, the Doctor's neck became stiffened, and his pride was incomprehensible. Days of poverty and hard struggles with the world, had become visionary. Now, he was an aristocrat and blue blooded. Yesterday, before Fortune cast her glance in his direc-

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tion, he was poor and humble as thousands of other Anglo-Saxons. But greed had converted him into a callous, hypocritical, church-going man.

Serenity and peace had reigned at the Doctor's home for many years. A lovely daughter had recently graduated from college, and one of the first young men she met, after completing her education, was the young lawyer.

Shortly before this, he had left the University. He was poor, but possessed indomitable will power and courage, and a burning ambition to climb the ladder of distinction. His courage was supported by extraordinary determination to win.

The young lawyer began to pay Mary Blackman undivided attention. A strong friendship sprung up between them. This finally ripened into love, and a romance was the inevitable. The young lady's father, as soon as the couple engaged themselves, re-

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sisted the intended marriage. The proposition was spurned and scorned by the money-made aristocrat. From every angle, the lawyer's reputation, family and habits were investigated. Unable to discover anything detrimental to his character, the Doctor decided that the aspirant for his daughter's hand was poor, and for that reason, the affair should be broken up.

Mary was not easily to be denied her wishes. Townbridge met the Doctor as coldly as he was received by the latter, and much to Blackman's surprise, the young man was unperturbed when they faced one another, and glared into the eyes of each other. The lawyer's expression was defiant and mandatory. The returned gaze was sullen. At last, in his career, the great surgeon had met his match in battle, where honor, love, wealth and poverty were contestants.

With low and meaning voice, Townbridge


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looking straight into his antagonist's eye, quietly, and in serious tone, remarked: "I learn that you have been investigating my family and myself. I think that you found nothing against either, except that all of us are poor, and of good common stock. I do not care, how far you enter into investigation of myself, but I consider that your probing my good old parents' reputations, is a blow below the belt."

He declared himself further, "I wish to state, that I do not wish your daughter now, and shall not expect such until I am capable of taking care of her, as well as you provide."

The young lady's father had little to say, but did bolster up enough courage to declare falteringly, that he would give his reply within a years' time. He was determined to crush the marriage agreement. His efforts consumed eight year's time to accomplish his unprincipled intention. Then it was done by foul means. But the Doctor paid dearly for his deed.

CHAPTER VI

 WISH to see Dr. Blackman," was the announcement at the latter's home one evening, as the house-maid answered the door-bell ring. "Hand him my card. He is expecting me."

This person was invited into the library, which was a spacious room, connecting with the reception hall, and the doors of which were open. In that room, often sat the family whiling away hours at reading, conversing and enjoying themselves with music which issued from a graphophone.

The card referred to bore the name, "Charles N. Lane." Upon the Doctor's receiving the announcement, he instantly proceeded to the library. After introducing Lane to his household and to Townbridge, who was calling upon Mary, Blackman and

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Lane, esconced themselves into a corner and began conversation in a low tone. In time, the object of Lane's visit became perceptible, especially to Townbridge. He recognized Lane as a professional lobbyist of the ordinary type, who earned his livelihood strictly from this manner of work. He was taking orders from Chessfield.

The young lawyer had become acquainted with the political curves and meaning of the Doctor. He had heard of the importance of the bill in which Blackman was vitally interested. In fact, he had studied the contents of the proposed Statute, and its unfair and undemocratic spirit. He had come to know the lobbying proclivities of his future father-in-law through others.

"Doctor, I have worked on every doubtful member of the House, and much more work is required. I understand that the Senate is all right, and you need not trouble yourself about that body. Chessfield sent me


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here, as you know, for further instructions and advice. Unless some money is used in entertaining, and in getting certain members in proper shape, your bill is lost!"

The Doctor responded, "You let me know what is the trouble with certain members, and especially one from this County, and I will set the wheels rolling. If you need a little money, call upon Chessfield for it, and it will be provided."

This portion of the conference between Blackman and Lane was overheard by Townbridge, who resolved then and there, to look deeply into the proposed legislation. If necessary, he would expose its intents and the participants, who were about to log-roll the people of the State, by placing a Law on the Statute books to satisfy a few at the expense of the many.

CHAPTER VII

H," whispered Townbridge to himself. "It seems that not only is our City rotten, but some nefarious work is going on in matters of State. This is indeed interesting. I will touch rock-bottom in this matter, regardless of what people are caught in the meshes, whether they be great or small."

Mary, upon approaching her fiance, noted his contracted brow and deep studied mien. "Why such deep study? You must have very serious thoughts, judging from your expression."

"I was only thinking about a trifling incident," he responded, wishing to conceal his thoughts from her. "Probably some day, you will understand."

He loved the object of his affections de-

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votedly. He had a premonition, that from that moment, at no far distant time, their relations would not only become estranged, but doubtless severed. Yet, he felt that as a citizen of his State, and being a professional man, and a quasi officer by virtue of his calling, not only was duty incumbent upon him to make known what he was about to learn, but he should do so at all hazards and risks. Townbridge understood the girl's father so well, that he perceived in a flash, that the Doctor was in a political conspiracy, to impose an unfair measure upon the people of the State. His perspicacity was so penetrating in the premises, that he was confident, that the bill would be passed by fair or unfair means. It would be enacted by the power of numbers and money, and at the sacrifice of the minority. Dollars would play a vital hand. After a short visit, Mary was bidden good-night.

CHAPTER VIII

THE next morning the young lawyer, after reaching his office, telephoned his newspaper friend, Cragg to see him.

"Something doing, chief," Cragg told his City Editor. "My young friend, Townbridge, has just 'phoned me. He may have a story. He is good for a big one some of these days. Watch him."

"Upstart, I fear Cragg," replied the editor. "However, here's hoping."

Cragg was in Townbridge's office within a few minutes. The latter furnished the newspaper man with a smoke, and in a few minutes they were in consultation.

"Cragg, I have gotten onto some State matters that are liable to be reduced to a big scandal. Some scoundrels are going to

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purchase a bill through the Legislature, if money is required. Already, money has been expended by lobbyists."

"Money-lobbyists-bill!" exclaimed Cragg interrogatively. "This is interesting. Where did you get the dope?" Townbridge related what he had gathered the evening before at Dr. Blackman's home.

"Now, Cragg you make for the Capitol today, and watch that gang. Size up some weak legislator, who doubtless has been approached. Get him into your confidence, and he may leak before you expect it. Another thing—you may learn that some fool lobbyist, has been paying in checks," declared Townbridge.

"Look here. You don't think those professionals would be so crazy as to pay men in checks, do you?" Craig asked.

"Oh, the wisest men, when they wish to put things over, commit awful blunders at times. You will learn before this outrage-

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ous affair has ended, that there are dozens of legislators and private citizens, who have been purchased with money, favors, promises or entertainment. Lobbying is all the same, whether a law-maker yields to Dame Flattery, Lord Gold or Queen Wine. Not only is the lobbyist guilty, but the legislator, who does not vote his own convictions, and those of his constituency."

Townbridge added, "Right does not govern when the POPULACE is not represented; when the powerful outwit the weak; when money stands in the way of justice and fair dealing. These harmful influences which we have discussed, should not govern, and I'll be damn'd if this proposed legislation, shall be enacted without the voters being made aware of what is transpiring at the Capitol."

"I'll aid you in this matter Townbridge. By George, I am with you! I will report to you tomorrow at noon, if not earlier. This

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particular bill, cannot come to a vote for a few days. I trust you will be able to expose the entire transaction." With this statement, Cragg left the lawyer's office, and proceeded to the House of Representatives.

CHAPTER IX

ALL clients who called at the young lawyer's office that day were requested to see him later. He gave no reasons for postponement of their matters. Excuses were not customary with him. Those who dealt with Townbridge had confidence in his ability and discretion. Few asked questions. His entire day was consumed in deep and quiet study, although he did not open a law-book.

His thoughts were in a quandary. He readily concluded, that he would condemn before the people of the State, one of the Commonwealth's most prominent physicians. And that personage was none other than the father of the girl, whom he loved most of all people. He saw her love take wings. He saw himself deprived of social

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prestige, which he had long enjoyed, and alliance with one of the most powerful families in the City. A combat between love, ambition, and what he adjudged to be his duty, had arisen.

He was asking himself, whether he would be a coward, should he falter and desist; whether he would despise or applaud himself. Townbridge thought so long and so ponderously during the entire day, that he was almost unable to control his own mind. The day being at a close, he left the office and went to the Club. There he mingled with friends, with hopes of throwing off all disturbance, and regaining his normal self. But the entire affair now haunted him like a phantom.

Finally, he departed from the Club in disgust, and went to the streets. While walking down a boulevard, whom did he meet, but Cragg. "I have some news for you," spoke up the latter."

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"What?" was the abrupt reply.

"Chessfield and James, one of our County's representatives, were huddled together today in a corner of the House conversing in a very busy manner."

"And then what?" asked the lawyer.

"I passed near them and overheard Chessfield tell James, that tomorrow he would hand him a check!"

"I am not surprised," responded Townbridge, who was not the least excited, nor did he seem exhilarated. He appeared to accept the discovery as a matter of course.

"Is that all, Cragg?"

"Yes, but I will trail those men to their holes. As soon as I neared them today, their conversation hushed. Chessfield fastened his eyes upon me, and every indication upon his countenance, appeared to be one of guilt. I will see you tomorrow. Good-night."

CHAPTER X

THAT, is a starter. Probably before the sun goes down to morrow, we may have an eye-opener," thought Townbridge as he went to his room.

He took a cold shower-bath, and by that time the maelstrom of doubt, fear and trepidation was dissipated from his mind. His thoughts regained clearness and soberness. He was himself again. No stone was left unturned. He was determined. Duty should lead the way, and love, if true, would find its path, although he might meet numerous obstacles. He foresaw a continuous life long storm brewing. What mattered, if he lost everything, save honor. To him that was all. To be honorable, he must be dutiful. Truth must and did reign supreme over him.

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He called upon Mary after dinner. She looked her prettiest and was at her best. The sun seemed to have veritably dripped its shining rays upon her head, and her tresses snatched off its particles of gold. Mary's eyes were as sparkling as the stars of Heaven. Her fawn-like figure swayed with grace, and Townbridge saw her in all grandeur, simplicity and Madonna-like beauty. He was enraptured by her splendor. For the while he forgot law, politics, trickery, chicanery, greed and malice, and lent his entire attention to the girl.

"Mr. Chessfield, Doctor," announced the latters' wife, who answered the ring of the door-bell. With alertness, equal to his watchfulness, the young lawyer trained his eyes upon Blackman, and opened wide his ears for every syllable and sound that might drop from the lips of the distinguished surgeon and the lobbyist. Every gesticulation made by this pair, was closely observed.

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That he might be able to hear as much of the conversation as possible, Townbridge said loud enough for the Doctor and the lobbyist to hear him clearly, "Let's have some music from the graphophone." Simultaneously, he moved towards the music-box, which was situated within a few feet of the gentlemen. In order to operate the machine, it was necessary for him to remain near it.

As soon as the music began, Dr. Blackman and Chessfield began conversing. They were somewhat careless, and relieved themselves of all fear of anyone paying attention to their words. Townbridge was apparently absorbed in the music, and was not suspected of being an eavesdropper.

"I agreed to give James a check tomorrow morning, Doctor," declared Chessfield. "He will give us a list of all House members who are with us, and all who are against us. His proposition, includes his promise,

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to line up as many votes as possible in favor of the measure."

With a smile of satisfaction, Blackman congratulated the lobbyist, and ordered, "Give him the check, and tell him to do everything within his power. If he needs additional money, hand it to him. That bill must pass!"

What Townbridge heard was enough to substantiate his surmises to Cragg, and Cragg's deductions had been corroborated. The attorney's blood boiled! Amazed, but not surprised, he looked indignantly at Blackman.


He did not censure Chessfield specially, as that half-handed lawyer rested under no disguise. He had been brevetted a professional lobbyist, and made no endeavor to conceal the fact. But for the Doctor, to be connected in such a high handed violation of the Law, and to pose as a clean and honest man under all circumstances, drew

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down the young attorney's greatest contempt.

"I'll settle with that pair of common crooks!" he asserted to himself. He decided to depart from Blackman's home at once and get in touch with Cragg. At one time, he had thought of employing a detective. But members of that craft, are too often suspected, and even detected themselves, instead of catching the object of their search. He needed none else than Cragg. He could rely upon his newspaper friend to tell facts. Townbridge's experience with hired detectives, had been that he could secure more information than facts through them. Excusing himself he left for the office.

CHAPTER XI

O provocation was given to his fiancée for his early departure, save that he had an important business matter that needed immediate attention. She again studied his countenance and his listless attitude. Mary felt that something of worry was on his mind. No explanation was urged. Theretofore, her sweetheart had always voluntarily revealed to her his business matters and relations in all affairs.

Somewhat piqued, but not making known the fact, she bade him good-night in her usual delightful manner. Returning to her home circle, Mary allowed her thoughts to range at length. Townbridge, ever being dearest to her heart, her thoughts were constantly turned towards him and all that he was about.

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The Doctor and Chessfield were still engaged in their conference. Suddenly, she was struck with the ensuing statements between the two.

"Chessfield, that bill is going to pass at any cost!"

"Doctor, I fear that you will spend more money than you contemplated."

"We shall have enough votes, if we are compelled to purchase something!"

"Well, with the good majority now against us, your bids will have to be raised. I am confident of that."

"Chessfield, you make certain to see James tomorrow morning when he reaches the Capitol, and give him the check. See that he delivers the goods."

"Doctor, when once he has cashed the check, he will have entered our net. Then we can drive him. He may balk for more money, but give it to him."

"I will abide by your instructions, sir."

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“Also, have some physician friend of yours to telegraph the leading physicians of every County. Instruct them to have all prominent people, and all regulars in their respective Counties, wire their representatives to vote for the bill. Send me a statement of telegraphic costs, and I will give you a check to cover same.” These were instructions by Blackman to his henchman. A few more parleys, and Chessfield left the house, while Blackman started towards his room to retire.

Mary did not relish what she had just heard. She interposed her parent's path. “Father, what is this you have been talking about with Mr. Chessfield?”

“Only a matter of business, daughter,” he answered. At the same time, he placed his hands affectionately upon her shoulders.

“Yes, but I heard you say something which leads me to believe that a scheme is on foot to purchase votes to put a law

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through the Legislature. Surely, you would not be a party to a dishonorable movement like that? Certainly, not my father!"

He laughed loudly and heartily. "My child, surely you would not accuse your old father, of doing a thing that is unethical. Not only that, you must not trouble your mind with politics. Don't allow anything you overheard to trouble you."

Again he moved in the direction of his room, but Mary was not satisfied. She stamped her fairy-shaped, foot and commanded, "My mind was given to me with which to think. I do not like this Mr. Chessfield! I believe him to be a bad man. You shall not evade my questions!"

"My little girl. It is nothing. You know, that your father is interested in a medical bill pending before the State Legislature. And I assure you, lest your fears molest you, that I am only endeavoring to have this bill passed by all legitimate means." With


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his customary diplomatic speech, he succeeded in partially pacifying Mary. But she was not a little disturbed. With laughing and worshipful eyes, she kissed him good-night.

Mary admonished him, "Father, please for your own, and your dear family's sake, do nothing that will bring the blush of shame." Doubly assuring his daughter that her wishes would be complied with, he left her to her reveries.

Mary Blackman, before retiring, spent much time pondering and brooding over what she had heard between the Doctor and Chessfield. Before she closed her eyes for the night, her thoughts reverted to Townbridge's attitude towards her of late.

CHAPTER XII

RAGG was aroused from his slumbers at his home by a telephone ring. Upon answering, he learned that Townbridge was on the other end of the wire. Believing that interesting news must be at hand, the newspaper man was glad of the call, although at an unseasonable hour.

"Please reach my office tomorrow morning by eight o'clock, if it is possible for you to fill the appointment. I have some vital clues, I might say facts," said the lawyer.

"I will reach there promptly." The receivers were hung up.

Townbridge did not retire early, but sat up far into the night. The surroundings were exceedingly silent. It seemed that the curls of smoke rising from his pipe created ruffles of noise. He had prepared his plans

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of battle against the enemies of the State, and the traitors of the people.

The leader of the offenders was the father of the girl to whom he was betrothed! Blackman's lieutenant was Chessfield, with himself as general. James, the representative, was the arch traitor of the State, who in turn, would contaminate other legislators, and they would be converted into puppets. The consideration was a pittance of gold. It was the old story of currency filching man of his honor.

Grey dawn awakened young Townbridge. He was sitting in a cushioned chair with his pipe in hand. He had not disrobed the night before. A struggle had been on between patriotism, duty, cowardice and love. Which would win? The lawyer was determined that his inner man should triumph. But woe unto the day! A thousand drag-nets would be laid for him. Appeals would endeavor to shatter his purpose. Threats

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would dare him. His life would be jeopardized!

Breakfast and a cup of strong coffee sharpened his mind. After reading the morning paper he was off to his office. Reaching there, he found Cragg, who announced himself, "I'm here. What news?"

"No news specially," laconically, was the response. "Just wide open clews. I shall depend upon you. I would enjoy a trip to the Capitol this morning to catch our friends, Chessfield, Blackman and James. But my going to the State House is out of the question. I wish that honor for you. If we are successful, I shall make it my duty to see that your paper recognizes your worth. Now to business."

Carefully going into every detail, and insisting that Cragg take note of all that transpired, the lawyer recited all that had taken place the evening before at Blackman's home.

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"Cragg, secure a miniature camera. One that you can conceal in your pocket. Place it where it will be easily accessible without detection when you need it."

"I see. This is real sleuth work! I see your plan," impatiently remarked Cragg, who was almost unable to restrain his enthusiasm until he had received all necessary instructions.

"Secure a confidential friend. A young man preferably, in whom you have implicit confidence and faith. Have him go with you onto the floor of the House. Reach there before the members go in. Watch for the check to pass hands. When it does, snap the picture. In that group, I shall expect Chessfield and the gentleman from this County."

"Townbridge, I have always insisted, that a lawyer is half detective. You should be at the head of Scotland Yards," was the compliment passed by the newspaper man.

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Cragg retired from Townbridge's office, and went to his office to prepare for turning the trick. He selected as his aide, a cub reporter, and sealed the latter's lips so securely that the novice feared lest he should hear himself breathe. Townbridge in the meantime, went about his duties.

CHAPTER XIII

MARY spent a sleepless night. All manner of thoughts disturbed her accustomed rest. The next morning, lines of worry showed upon her countenance. That pernicious bill was ever before her mind's eye. Her father's evasive manner had almost distracted the girl. She was on the verge of distrusting her own parent. This trend of suggestion was awful to her, as she had never before, had cause to suspect him.

Dr. Blackman loved his angelic daughter. But needed be, more acute headwork than his own, to deceive his child. She was blood of his blood and flesh of his flesh. She inherited his own powers of reasoning. Discerning the hollowness of his daughter's eyes, he inquired, "And what may trouble

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my little girl this beautiful morning?"

Retorting with some of his own sidestepping, she answered, "Many things my big father!" He laughed off her answer and dropped the course of questioning. Breakfast finished, Blackman was ready to leave for his office. He noticed that Mary's kiss was not fervent, and she gave him no caress.

The day was long and dreary. The weather humid. Mary was irritable, and had cause. Her future husband had failed to communicate with her, which was a rarity. She wondered why, and imagined all kinds of reasons. She missed the daily chat with him. She even coupled the probable cause with a fear, that Townbridge had connected her father with the diabolical scheme on foot at the Capitol. The truth was, the young lawyer had become so engrossed in his practice, that he overlooked Mary. She had passed as entirely from his mind, for the time being, as if no such person existed.

CHAPTER XIV

DOCTOR, James is wavering! He declines to accept the check, or the equivalent in cash. Fears of being discovered, have arisen in his mind overnight. Conscience also seems to have distressed him. I am calling upon you for a suggestion!" This was discouraging information rendered by Chessfield over telephone.

In heated words, Blackman remarked sarcastically, "I thought I had the proper person in you to deliver the goods. I suspect that you are wavering. If you are unable to cope with the situation, I can procure someone who is!" With that pleasant assurance, the Doctor terminated the conversation. Although, the foregoing conversation was held in a closed booth at the State-House, a newspaper man heard the

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entire dialogue between Chessfield and Blackman. This he did by a clever ruse.

Cragg, with his cub, was early upon the site of the approaching scene, destined to be enacted by the lobbyist and corrupt legislator. He was armed with camera as pre-arranged. After considerable conversing, and heated argument, in smothered tones between the two actors in a distant corner of the House, Cragg knew that a snag had been struck.

Observing Chessfield suddenly leave the legislator, Cragg, with lightning-like rapidity and cat-like caution, followed the object of his prey. The newspaper man was one of considerable and varied experience. On many occasions he had applied his resourcefulness to its utmost. Rushing to an annex of the Governor's office, he used a telephone which had connection with the booth in which Chessfield was installed.

"Connect me with booth No. 3 at once!"

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were the commanding instructions received by the telephone operator. Believing them to be the words of the Governor's secretary, she complied without hesitation. Cragg was on the line. He heard everything that passed between the two conspirators. Like a hound following the scent, his camp upon Chessfield's trail was resumed. Chessfield, now had in Cragg, a shadow.

The two men reappeared upon the floor of the House simultaneously. Both were acquainted professionally, but not personally. Their views on public matters were antagonistic. One represented greed and gold and selfishness. The other, public opinion, through the power of the mighty press. The natures of the two men were as far apart as the poles. Chessfield observed Cragg, but had no suspicions.


Carefully following every movement of the lobbyist, Cragg saw a House-page con-

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vey a note to James, who left his seat, and made for the corner where the lobbyist was awaiting him. After a few minutes serious conversation, the legislator returned to his place. Chessfield departed from the Capitol, with Cragg stealthily upon his heels. He was shadowed until Chessfield entered Blackman's home. Cragg then prosecuted his steps to Townbridge's office.

"What news, Cragg?" asked the lawyer. All happenings were narrated. Assuring Townbridge that he would be on the job at the Capitol the next morning, the day's work ended.

CHAPTER XV

RAGG, by intuitiveness, believed that James would accept the bribe, but was considerably worried as to securing the evidence. Upon reaching the newspaper office, he telephoned Townbridge and told him to get in touch with Chessfield's movements.

Fortune being with him in his project, Townbridge surmised that Chessfield would visit the Doctor, and immediately left his office for Blackman's residence. The attorney dropped in, apparently, for the avowed purpose of taking lunch. Chessfield was on hand. The meal not being ready, Townbridge was wide awake to capture every word that passed between Blackman and Chessfield.

"I will handle James tomorrow morning.

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I have an engagement with him at ten o'clock at the House. I will bring him across," said the lobbyist. That was enough. The attorney had learned all, at that time, that he could expect or care for.

After dining, he and Mary repaired to a rustic seat on the lawn. His mind being obsessed with the political task before him, he failed to observe Mary's worry. She was deeply interested in his studied countenance, and ventured to inquire the reason.

"Just thinking. That's all," he replied.

"I have some questions which I desire to propound to you," came in response to his answer.

"Fire away!" he said, as if amused. But Townbridge changed expression when she asked questions, one of which was, "Do you know anything about the medical bill pending before the Legislature which will soon come to a vote?"

Surprised at the interrogation, but not

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allowing the young lady to discover such, he advised her that he knew little more than what he had read in the newspapers.


She then asked him, "Can you learn for me, whether any efforts are on foot to purchase this bill's way through?"

"Perhaps," was the only reply.

She plied dozens of other queries, but received little satisfaction. However, she had no doubt that her fiance knew nothing, and concluded that all her misgivings of several days previous, were unfounded and merely products of imagination. As to his indifference, she was certain that he had not intended such. His manner was brought about by mental taxation of legal matters.

When Townbridge pressed her hand in farewell that afternoon, little did either dream that this was the last time that the young lawyer and reformer would darken the Blackman threshold.

CHAPTER XVI

 LICK! Click!" were the soft noises in rapid succession, heard only by a heroic newspaper man and his associate. A small camera had enacted a great and vital scene in a drama, which eventually precipitated the State into a convulsive scandal! Legislative halls, by the pressure of a camera button, were converted into a welded pot of corruption!

Political stars faded into oblivion to shine no more! Professional prestige tottered and fell from its lofty pedestal down to destruction! Society fabrics were rent in to fragile threads. Romance and love were shattered.

Canceled checks and a camera shot, would rid the State-House of ulcerous lobbyists and festive thieves! Legislation

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would be passed upon by untrammelled law makers, who represented all citizenry of the State, and not the privileged and unprincipled few, in whom was crystallized the great mass of wealth!

Passing of a Two Hundred Dollar check, from a professional lobbyist in the pay of the regulars, to a corrupted legislator, had been snapped! And, under the very eyes of a statuary woman! She, who stood topmost on the dome of the Capitol, where she weighed JUSTICE with a pair of scales. The virtue of the State, for which she stood signal to Three Million people, had been polluted by vulturous men! Her standards of WISDOM and MODERATION had been hurled from their dizzy height! But the world would soon know why.

Cragg caught the picture for which he had waited, and his reporter consort stood witness to the bribe! The newspaper man hurried to Townbridge's office and dis-

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closed his success. He was exultant, but the lawyer was calm, and accepted the news as if it had been preconstructed in his own mind and by his own power. He was unmoved and evinced no surprise. The chain of evidence had not been completed, and he commanded his newspaper aide to hold silence, and to allow no one to know the revelations. Cragg was directed to have the picture enlarged from the camera film, and under no circumstances, was the photographer to gain knowledge of the intents and significance of the picture.

“Next, Cragg, we must know where the check was cashed. This remains to be learned. We are unaware as to whether it is the Doctor’s or Chessfield’s. Also, we are ignorant as to what bank paid it. Therein remains some hard thinking and ingenious work.” Both men looked each other squarely in the eyes. They realized that they were

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confronted with an obstacle worth their wits and while.

"However," concluded the attorney, "every Rubicon and Delaware can be crossed. A criminal always leaves some clew in his wake that will ultimately lead to his discovery and undoing. We will scrape every avenue of suspicion for traces of evidence." They were then silent for a few minutes.

"That's all for today I presume," declared Cragg gathering his hat. Receiving an affirmative nod, he left the office.

CHAPTER XVII

MARY Blackman was anxious and worried. She had been considering deeply and thoughtfully, events of the past several days. The girl began to waver in her exalted opinion of her father. Was he back of a questionable scheme and trick by which to railroad a bill through the Legislature? Had he substantively lied to her? Were his evasions and declarations, falsehoods?

Had Townbridge become imbued with a conviction, that the Doctor was connected with a plot to purchase votes for the bill? She trusted that he would call upon her at an immediate date. She desired to utilize every means within her power to secure a commitment from him, as to his knowledge or ignorance of what she felt certain was taking place in her home.

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Could she break down the barriers of silence which were fortifying the attorney? If he had knowledge of the marplotters' devices, was she competent to extract what he knew? He must have been cognizant of something bearing on the situation.

The clear skies of former happiness had darkened. They had become laden with the forebodings of evil. What would a day, a week bring forth? She brooded over the situation continually. Her telephone calls had become wider and wider apart. She was the sufferer, and with all, an innocent one. The suspense was wearing upon her nervous system.

On the other hand, Townbridge had temporarily thrown affection to the four winds. The weight of the portending exposure had made him a man of fifty. He saw the disclosure of a scandal which would rock the foundations of the entire State. He had bowed to the inevitable. FATE had com-

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manded him to probe the treachery to the bottom, and he would act accordingly. He, too, was innocent, but love could not divert his intention from what he considered his duty as a patriot, lawyer and citizen.

CHAPTER XVIII

QUONE OF YOUR LEGISLATORS IS A TRAITOR TO HIS COMMISSION! THAT LAW-MAKER SOLD HIMSELF TO VOTE AND WORK FOR THE MEDICAL BILL! THE STATE HAS BEEN DISHEVELED OF ITS PURITY, AND LIBERTY IS GROUND TO DUST! DEMOCRACY, PLACED IN TRUST BY THE PEOPLE OF THE COMMONWEALTH, HAS BEEN DENIED ITS FREE AND UNTRAMMELED PRIVILEGE! THE LOBBYIST HAS BEEN ABOUT HIS INSIDIOUS WORK! WE HAVE THE PROOFS! AS DECENCY DEMANDS IT, THE GOVERNOR MUST INVESTIGATE!

JOHN TOWNBRIDGE."

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An eminent surgeon and his inestimable wife had just seated themselves for their morning meal in their luxurious home. A cry of horror broke from the lips of their lovely daughter, as she stood transfixed and pallor stricken at the door-way! The parents were seized with fear, as they thought her suddenly ill.

Husband and wife rushed towards the young woman. As they did, the morning paper fell from the daughter's grasp. Large black headlines as above recited, magnetized the sight of Dr. Blackman! Mary shrank from him, as if he were some ominous and poisonous viper! By perception, coupled with a guilty conscience, he knew the news story had fastened the crime upon him!

"You! You have disgraced yourself and family!" the girl screamed at him. "I begged you not do what you have! What will we do?" she weepingly whispered.

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In the meantime, the mother was stunned by the scene which had passed before her! She was in utter ignorance of what it all meant. She did not understand. The daughter refused to be comforted. She had grown hysterical, and was carried to her room, where she was placed in bed.

At last, Truth had come to light, and with most destructive effect! Mary's happiness had gone glimmering for all time. Dr. Blackman, after an hour or so became collected. He secreted himself in his library and read Townbridge's charges.

CHAPTER XIX

THE Legislature was in tourmoil! Members were thrown into consternation upon reading the morning paper. A pall of fear hovered over the General Assembly. Chessfield and James were absent! Their failure to put in an appearance caused considerable comment. Members of both House and Senate, knew Chessfield in the capacity of a lobbyist. There was not one, who, had not on various occasions, been buttonholed or entertained by him, when he was interested in some particular legislation.

Telegrams to every newspaper in the State, heralded the charges by the young lawyer. In his accusations, he promised to promulgate additional exposures at intervals! The ears of the entire people were

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open, and eager to catch every word that he would offer. He was the cynosure of comments by thousands. By Ten o'clock on the morning of the publication, Townbridge was the object of questions, threats and dares! He was collected and cool. His replies to all queries were dispassionate. One of his first callers was Chessfield.

"What do you mean Mr. Townbridge by those charges in the Chronicle!" he asked of the young attorney.

"Just what you read, sir," came the direct and unequivocal answer.

"Do you know what you are doing?"

"Yes."

"What proof have you?"

"Sufficient. Why do you ask? Are you involved?" This interrogatory embarrassed the lobbyist for a second.

"I am not involved, but judging from the tone of your card, a prominent surgeon is an object of your baseless canard. He is in-

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nocent. That man is my friend!" vehemently declared Chessfield.

"Is the Doctor entangled in this scandal?" fired back the attorney.

"He is not! You are engaged to his daughter. Have you no feeling or regard for her?"

"What is that to you?"

All the power in his big voice in command, Chessfield defiantly challenged Townbridge, "You can not expect to substantiate your outrageous charges. You are fighting power and money. You can not hope to combat them successfully!"

"Is that so?" sarcastically replied the lawyer.

Chessfield was infuriated. Starting towards the door, he concluded in a loud voice, "You are risking your profession! You are jeopardizing your very life!"

"I have no fear of you, Mr. Chessfield. Count on that. Cowards are never feroci-

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ous," was the quiet rejoinder. "And furthermore, my dear sir, you, are guilty as hell!"

"What is that Townbridge?"

"Only a fact. Good-day!" was the parting shot and invitation to leave the office. Chessfield accepted.

Dr. Blackman, in the meantime was greatly worried. He, too called upon Townbridge for an explanation. "Young man, you doubtless have myself in mind, in your charges. But you have missed the mark!" Townbridge did not reply, but looked severely at the Doctor, which he had oftentimes done before.

"You are endeavoring to bring disgrace upon my family and self. You may from this moment, consider your and my daughter's engagement at an end!" The young man was coldly silent. Emotion was struggling within, but he did not manifest it.

Blackman, losing control of his temper,


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demanded, "Have you no sense of honor in this matter! You have been received in my home for years. And now, you would splotch my escutcheon of unsullied honor! You shall not do it!" Townbridge continued silent.

"I admonish you," shouted the Doctor, "you shall pay dearly for this! Even if it costs me blood!" The lawyer did not reply. He was looking into space.

A few more denunciations from Blackman, and the young attorney rose from his chair, and said, "Doctor, I do not care to discuss this matter with you. Pardon me, as I have some business to attend to. Will you kindly excuse me?" With this declaration, directed at him, Blackman left the office in a rage.

CHAPTER XX

BOVE IS A PICTURE SECURED BY CRAGG, THE NEWSPAPER MAN, SHOWING THE PASSING OF A PAPER FROM CHESSFIELD TO JAMES. THE PAPER IS ALLEGED TO BE A BRIBE IN THE FORM OF THE CHECK IN QUESTION."

On the front page of the noon edition of Cragg's sheet, was the picture snapped by a camera in the hands of the reporter. This disclosure added to the sensation of the morning. Copies of the paper were eagerly sought by State legislators and people on the streets. A resolution had already been passed by the House, demanding that the Speaker of that body appoint a committee to investigate the charges.

The accused legislator had left the City!

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None knew where he was. He had been sought by newspapers for interviews, but the man was not to be found. This fact was printed in bold type by the press.

Townbridge, anticipating that evidence in addition to what he had would be necessary, telephoned Cragg to see him at the latter's office. The men went into a long conference behind locked doors.

Private detectives of various abilities, had been employed by the accused and their friends, to dog the tracks of the lawyer and the newspaper man. They became aware of this and took every precaution to throw the hounds off the trail. Townbridge and Cragg escaped from a side door of the former's office, and boarded a taxi-cab for the Capitol. They ordered the chauffeur to proceed by a circuitous route, but the detectives followed suit.

The State-House being reached, Townbridge sent word to the Governor, the

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Speaker and the President, that he and Cragg were desirous of a joint conference early as possible. The Governor granted the request. His Excellency agreed to arrange a meeting, and told the two men that he would make known to them the appointed time. This being the understanding, they left the Capitol.

The next morning's issue of the Chronicle, in a card written by Townbridge, charged Dr. Blackman, Chessfield and James with bribing the required majority to pass the medical bill! In no uncertain terms, the young lawyer laid the crime at the doors of these gentlemen. Ten additional members of the House were caught in the dragnet! A bold stroke had been wielded. Townbridge now had a gigantic task in locking the charges upon the men, so that they would be unable to escape his merciless allegations. So far he was safe.

The next issue of the press, carried de-

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nials, denunciations and counter charges. Blackman and Chessfield were loudest in their protestations of innocence, and were strongest in their excoriations, but Townbridge never faltered.

Townbridge was under a tremendous strain. Great drawn lines clouded his brow. With it all, he was undisturbed and held the ground which he had gained. The City's atmosphere was saturated with discussion. The street corners were the rendezvous of pedestrians, who conversed at length about the scandal. Little time was spent on the thoroughfares by the subject of our story. His path was beaten between his office and apartment. On the streets, he was pointed out by people who knew him in person and by sight. He declined to discuss the matter with friends, and nothing could be drawn from him.

CHAPTER XXI

MARY reached Townbridge's office at an early hour the next morning. She was worn and wan. Her features disclosed distress, and the effects of much anxiety and suffering. Rather than defiance, she manifested humility. Although the young lawyer sympathized greatly with her, she was greeted cheerfully, and he inquired as to her health.

"Affairs have reached a terrible state! I do not know what I will do," she said. She declared that she was indeed surprised at him.

"Tell me," she pleaded, "is father guilty of your charges? Give me some hope that he will be able to emerge from this dilemma without disgrace!" He did not reply, but looked at her unflinchingly. The silence

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was gloomy. Maintenance of this attitude bore heavily upon her already prostrate self. He was determined to make no answer. The suspense was awful!

"Speak man, speak!" she hysterically cried. Townbridge's iron nerve under this circumstance of test, converted him into an inanimate statue in Mary's sight. Tears trickled down her cheeks. He was apparently unmoved, but expression and demeanor deceived impulses.

"For your sake, little girl, I regret that all these conditions have come about. Endeavor not to grieve too much. Trust that matters will adjust themselves, and that you will pass through the ordeal with heroism, and be happy in the outcome."

"Your proposed consolation begets me nothing, sir!" she retorted indignantly. "I did not believe that you, for my sake, would ever bring such disgrace upon my people! Can you not cease your exposure? Please,

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just for me. All this will kill me!" These requests were suppliant.

His heart was bleeding with sorrow. Several years of his devotion, and all their round of happiness and pleasant relations, with lightning quickness, passed through his mind in panoramic fashion. A struggle surged within him. Mary discerned that Townbridge had no intention of relenting or revealing anything specially to her, or preventing a crisis in any event. Her eyes flamed furiously! She challenged his love!

"A failure of agreement by you to desist in this prosecution, is uncontrovertible proof that you do not care for me! Continuance of this conduct and our engagement is at an end!" He made no reply.

"I will give you another chance! Will you quit?"

"I will not Mary, come what may!" A cannon-shot could not have been more demolishing. His reply was final.

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He loved the girl deeply, and had never cared for another, as he did Mary. She accepted his declaration as an ultimatum. It came as a great shock, and she half fainted under the excitement and nervous tension.

Townbridge caught the woman to prevent her from falling, and seated her in a chair. Sufficiently revived within a short while, she rose to go. He escorted her to her automobile. His farewell was kindly, but Mary gave no recognition of their parting to the man whom she had idealized and dreamed of for many years as her future husband.

The young lawyer's mind was in a haze. He forgot the burning issue in which he was interested as he returned to his office. The woman of his choice was gone! Gone forever! FATE loomed up before him again. Something within, told him that Mary Blackman would never again care. He col-

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lected his thoughts however, and endeavored to eliminate all recollections of her.

A test indeed, was then on. Who loved, the man or the woman? Townbridge pondered at length for many hours over the question which had arisen in his mind. Despite everything, he was charitable enough to grant that Mary had reasonable provocation to believe that he did not care for her.

CHAPTER XXII

HARLOTTE Beverly was one of the most popular young women of the unmarried set in the City. Charming and fascinating to her large circle of friends, she was the hunted prize of a score of well-to-do young men. Her manners were pleasing. Her complexion was olive, set off with lips and cheeks tinted with Nature's roses. A big supply of brown hair engulfed her head.

Haughtiness was one of her traits, but not enough to injure the feelings of others or cause criticism. Yet this commanded considerable notice among all about her. She had a disposition of sweetness and vivacity most captivating. Her nature was affectionate, but her likes and dislikes strong; her friendship unbending. Char-

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lotte was far superior to those of the fair sex among her coterie of friends and acquaintances. She loved art, music and literature, and her taste for the beautiful was insatiable. By everyone, she was regarded as a lovely young woman, and was considered a good catch for the lucky man.

Townbridge's career had been observed steadily by Charlotte. They had been passing friends for years. Admiring a man of ambition, fearlessness and lofty purposes in life, she had a desire to cultivate the young lawyer's friendship. To know him well and to converse with him, was her only desire in this direction.

Cragg knew Miss Beverly well. They casually met on the street, and were going in the same direction. Their conversation finally drifted to the great political strife then on. "Mr. Cragg, young Mr. Townbridge has loomed up big of late. Who would ever have thought that one so young,

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would have become the petrel, about whom this storm is raging, and which is passing over the State?"

"Miss Charlotte, I predicted some months ago that he would be heard from at an early day. And that is not all. He is a man of DESTINY. He has nerve, brains, and the capacity to mould a career with sure footedness. Here he comes now."

"Good afternoon, Mr. Townbridge," Charlotte greeted the lawyer. After passing a few pleasant remarks, she bid him God speed in his undertaking.

The day was well-nigh spent and Townbridge was homeward bound. Mary passed in her automobile and glared at him with despicable eye. He tipped his hat and bowed, but was spurned. Feeling certain then that she did not care further for him, he determined to forever eliminate Mary from his life!

He continued his way, and the following

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thoughts engraved themselves indelibly upon his mind:

“AMBITION is a consuming fire which drives human efforts to dizzy heights of accomplishment, and does not cease to burn, until the dramatic action of Life has been smothered by the drop of Death's curtain!

“This vehicle of attainment is moved onward by deep laid inspiration imbedded in the Mind and Soul. Its continuity of motion is promoted by a desire to reach goals of the highest endeavor, and to surpass, after equaling, what others have done.

“This undercurrent of unrest is born of dreams. The sequence is composed of plans by which these formulas of Mind are executed into concrete and abstract realities.

“The architecture of hoped for facts being drafted, Man is compelled to brush aside fear, and determine a campaign commensurate with the axiom, ‘Abolish Fear and You Can Accomplish Anything That You Wish.’

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"Dreams make men. Dreams were the source of Napoleon's, Alexander's and Caesar's conquest of empires. Without dreams, they would never have had the world at their feet.

"Dreams, also man and unman. The First Consul of France wished too much, and was abandoned an exile at St. Helena because he became intoxicated with ambition, and never anticipated the impossible.

"Even yet can be heard the anguished cries of Cardinal Woolsey, as he deplored the day, that he served his king with more zeal than his God.

"But AMBITION shall satisfy me everything, win or lose!"

Work, work, work drowned all thoughts of the woman of his former devotion. Only self aggrandizement had become his aim. Yet he determined never to sacrifice or violate principle, his greatest trait. Within a few months he became hardened to his lot

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and declared that Mary would see the day when she would honor, rather than despise him!

CHAPTER XXIII

REPRESENTATIVE James had not been seen or heard of since appearance of the charges. The press of the entire State was taking note of that fact. No trace of him was found. This was declared to be *prima facie* evidence of his guilt.

The Governor called for a conference in his office on the following morning. Townbridge, Cragg, the cub-reporter, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House were present. The young lawyer went to his room, not to leave it again until office hours the next day. After perusing his morning mail, he proceeded to the Capitol.

When all were assembled, the Governor wished details. After hearing from Townbridge and the newspaper men, the Chief

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Executive asked the maker of the charges, how he intended to produce the check. "Leave that to me, Your Excellency. You set a time for the hearing, and I will produce the proof," quickly asserted the lawyer.

The Governor was dissatisfied. He entertained considerable doubt as to the young man's ability to offer evidence that would ferret out the truth. Townbridge stubbornly declined to make known the manner and means, by which he would bring to light the tangible and all important evidence. In fact, although it was known only to himself and Cragg, he had not entirely framed his plans, but left his auditors under the impression that he had all details well in hand.

FATE works by devious and mysterious routes. TRUTH, though concealed, finally issues from its hiding place. This was a foregone conclusion reached by Town-

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bridge. That evening found him at his club. There he met cordial salutations and scornful scrutiny. Blackman was a member of the same organization and possessed a legion of friends. THE MAN WHO MAKES GOOD, naturally creates enmity as well as LOYALTY. Critics carp to his back, while advocates side with him. This was exactly the case in Townbridge's instance.

"Good evening, Mr. Townbridge," reached the ears of the young lawyer as he passed through the grill-room. The party addressing him was none other than Charlotte Beverly, who was accompanied by a gentleman friend. Taking advantage of this opportunity, she invited him to dine with them. He was undecided lest he should intrude, but both insisted, and he accepted.

Charlotte's side of the conversation immediately turned to the charges. Her guest was silent. Taking note of the prominent

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young man's aversion to the political question of the hour, she discussed other subjects generally. She did not for a moment realize that she was making a profound impression upon him. He was delighted with her line of thought and brilliant conversation. The more she entered into discussion, the more interested he became. Sudden consideration, tending towards great liking for the young woman sprung through his mind. "She is a splendid girl. Her intellect sparkles with wit. She is engaging company," thought Townbridge.

The evening passed pleasantly enough. Miss Beverly was charmed with Townbridge, his brevity of conversation, his serious demeanor and his wise conclusions upon various matters. She was particularly impressed with his attitude of non-committal.

"Will you not call to see me? Some time real soon? Any evening to suit yourself."

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Charlotte plied question and answer in a manner that was beautifully coquettish, yet not in the least forward.

"Your invitation affords me pleasure Miss Beverly. I shall take advantage of your offer at my earliest opportunity. Now, that I have enjoyed my evening most pleasantly, and some important matters are demanding my attention tonight, I am asking you both to excuse me for this time."

"Political I suppose? No? Legal," observed Charlotte with a twinkle of the eye. Only a smile passed over the countenance of the interrogated, but there was no response as he passed out of the room.

"I like that man. He is serious, and has a purpose in life that is indeed laudable," Charlotte remarked to her escort after their guest was out of hearing.

CHAPTER XXIV

TOWNBRIDGE was in his office the next morning at an early hour. No sooner had he seated himself at his desk than his telephone rang and Cragg was talking to him.

"What about that evidence as to the cashed check!" asked the newspaper man.

"Cragg, please come to my office. Such matters in a crisis like this, should not be discussed over the wire!" Within thirty minutes the reporter was on hand.

"We must be very cautious, and not allow anything to drop into anyone's ears. Shakespeare said, you know, that walls can hear," warned Townbridge. "Now, as a matter of fact, I have taken no steps to produce that particular evidence. I realize that it must be done this afternoon."

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"Townbridge, that will be too late. You must not allow your case to fall! The Governor almost demanded the check before agreeing to go into this. He said pictures do not prove much."

"Yes, I know. We will not even trust the Governor of the State with what we hold in store. He might unintentionally allow something to escape."

"Yes, I know," said Cragg, impatiently, as he was cut short by the young lawyer.

"One of the great troubles with you newspaper men, is that you wish to shoot before your guns are loaded. I do not intend, to allow even you into my scheme. Not that I distrust you, but I wish to offer you a little surprise."

"But will we have time, Townbridge?"

"Well, at this rate, the entire day will be consumed by the preliminaries of the investigation. I will see you at the Capitol at ten o'clock this morning." In this manner,

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Cragg was discomfitted by his friend, and the consultation closed.

"Fine morning, Miss Beverly. What brings you onto the streets at such an early hour?" asked Cragg as he encountered the young lady.

"I am on my way to Mr. Townbridge's office. I have a little business for him to transact."

The newspaper man, with a reporter's curiosity, was on the verge of asking her what her visit to the lawyer's office meant. He was as immediately prompted with the thought, that such might be impertinent, and refrained.

Townbridge was surprised with the visit of the lady, and displayed his feeling fervently.

"I have some news that may be of value to you in your case!"

"I thank you for your interest," the young lawyer answered.

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"A young man whom I know works at the Eastern National Bank. He was sitting near us last evening at the club. After you left, those with him began discussing the charges which you have made. The man in question, stated that a certain check passed through his hands at the bank! He added, that other checks, endorsed by certain members of the Legislature, also went under his observation. All were issued and signed by Dr. Blackman. They were cashed a day or two prior to the charges promulgated by yourself."

"This is certainly interesting, Miss Beverly. I will investigate. Promise me, that you will not repeat the information which you have just revealed to another soul."

"I promise you," she declared doggedly, as if sworn.

The revelation was not dwelt upon any more than has been recited, as Townbridge did not care for Miss Beverly to realize that

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the clew, which she had just given him, was so powerfully important! It was the evidence about which he had been thinking a great deal, and as to just how he would secure it. He discussed the weather, flowers, current events, and every other conceivable subject which he could bring to bear until she had made her exit. He seized upon every word uttered by the young woman, and stored it away securely in his memory. No more than ordinary interest was displayed, insofar as she could detect. He had a motive, as is easily perceived, in his attitude.

Townbridge thanked her for her kindness as she rose to go, and followed her to the door. When he grasped her hand in bidding her good-bye, Charlotte experienced a thrill pass through her entire system. This was doubtless a psychological effect upon the mind of woman, but not intended by the man. Be it as it was, she

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could not analyze the unconscious pressure of Townbridge's hand. She was at sea as to its intention, whether for gratitude, or the beginning of a great friendship, which she decided had sprung up between them. She trusted that it was both.

CHAPTER XXV

MARY'S love had changed to hate! The newspapers were blatant with stories of the investigation. Each line printed, were as so many javelin darts into the heart and soul of the young lady whose father was involved.

The entire Legislature, which had been converted into a committee of the whole, upon instructions of the Governor, met at ten o'clock to begin the probe. At a table near the Speaker's stand were seated the Governor, Townbridge, Cragg and the cub-reporter. Spectators filled the gallery beyond its capacity. Among those who were onlookers, were men of the highest prominence in professional and business life. A sordid atmosphere of suspicion, curiosity and indignation prevailed.

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On the front row of the gallery, Charlotte Beverly was seated. Her entire attention was directed towards Townbridge. Was she in love with this intrepid young lawyer? Had visions of a happy future enraptured her? Only she, knew what was coursing through her mind.

Another interested person was Harold Raymond, the young capitalist, who had first observed Townbridge at the City Hall. He had not heard from the new leader of the young men in several months. Raymond was formulating plans by which to shove him upward on the scale of distinction, if the latter was successful in his present undertaking. He had no doubt, that the investigation would prove all that had been alleged.

The probe was on. First on the witness stand, was Townbridge. Two thousand pairs of eyes and ears were upon him. No sooner had he begun to speak, than his hear-

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ers were convinced that he was a man of iron will, and thoroughly equipped to undergo all tests of examination and crossing. All felt that he knew what he was about. His words made a great impression.

The opposition were thoroughly aroused to the seriousness of the situation, and immediately began plying tactics to defeat the ends of justice. Ten of the guilty legislators were in their seats, and were determined to wash their skirts of filthy pollution. With all their confidence, the countenances of each disclosed indications of fear. In Townbridge they had a mortal combatant. Before another day had closed he received threats on his life!

His friends advised him not to push his charges against the ten, but he stubbornly declined to yield to their wishes. He replied to their entreaties, "A man who will sell his vote is a contemptible coward! He is an assassin of the State! If I must suf-

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fer injury or death, let it come! I assure you, gentlemen, I have no fear." Their argument was useless, and they ceased in their endeavors to dissuade him.

What's this? In the midst of Townbridge's testimony, rumor became rife throughout the Assembly that Representative James had skipped the State to some South American republic, or other foreign country! Extra newspapers soon pervaded the legislative hall asserting the same. Townbridge, catching sight of a head line, displayed a slight smile of triumph. The committee and gallery were in confusion upon receiving this news. The chairman rapped vigorously for order!

We will not tire our readers by repeating the evidence which has been recited hereinbefore. The first day of the hearing comprised calling of the roll of both Houses and expediting other routine. All members answered save the main bribe-taker, who

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had disappeared as completely as if he had fallen prey to ocean sharks. His whereabouts were enveloped in mystery. Strange to relate, the lobbyist, Chessfield was nowhere to be seen about the Capitol! Of all spectators, his presence was expected.

Townbridge detailed his testimony from its inception to production of the canceled checks. The threats against him were entered into. Newspapers of the City and State were aflame with the young accuser's charges. Adjournment was had at two o'clock in the afternoon until the next morning. Upon leaving the House, Townbridge met Charlotte, whom he had not seen during the examination.

"I wish to congratulate you upon your demeanor before that crowd of politicians. You were as cool as a battle-scarred veteran." He thanked her for the compliment. After the two had chatted a few minutes, he excused himself, as he wished to see the Governor before the latter left the Capitol.

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A large number of legislators were waiting in the reception room to see the Governor. Upon Townbridge's entrance, the Chief Executive's secretary came forward with much deference, and asked if he could be of any service. All eyes were centered upon the young lawyer. He was unknown to them. His attitude was distant, stiff and cool. He was not a politician. His battles had been won upon merit, and not by hypocritical pats on the back and unfeeling handshaking. Others were detained for Townbridge. The Governor rose and extended a hand of congratulation.

The Chief Executive was presented with a document by the young lawyer, which was a "notice to produce," to be served upon the Eastern National Bank. This was a legal command, to be signed by the Governor ordering the cashier of the banking institution to have on hand the ensuing morning, the cancelled checks. They were cer-

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tain evidence of the bribery of the legislators, and the sale of the State's honor. That no mistake might be made, the order called for accounts of Dr. Blackman and Chessfield for six months prior to the eruption of the scandal, to the then, present date. Townbridge, to make his evidence doubly sure, produced similar papers to His Excellency to sign, which called upon every bank in the City to do likewise.

“Duces Tecum, Mr. Townbridge! I have been wondering how you would go about producing the evidence. I will have these papers served for you.”

Reaching for the signed notices, Townbridge replied, “Governor, as I wish this well done, I will do it myself. I am the prosecutor in this cause, and I do not intend that any slip shall occur.” The subpoenae being given to the young lawyer, he left the Capitol, and went directly to each bank cashier, and served these officials in person. His work for the day had been completed.

CHAPTER XXVI

TWO pistol shots rang out upon midnight! Several hundred theatre-goers, homeward bound, rushed to the spot. The object of the would-be assassin had been temporarily laid low on the pavement. A gun flash had issued from a nearby alley! Instantly, a score of men were in hot pursuit of the man who had attempted murder!

The moon furnished a splendid light for the scene. She had cast her rays like day onto the spot where lay the young man who was surrounded by numerous sympathizing pedestrians. Cries of "Lynch him! Kill him!", rent the night air, as the scoundrel fled. A crisp atmosphere of Spring, overhung the community of the crime, and the Stars of Heaven lent their aid toward relieving the morbid situation.

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"Who is he? Is he dead?" and dozens of other questions were hurriedly asked, by those about the victim. Blood trickled from the man's right arm above the wrist and oozed through Townbridge's coat-sleeve, as he lay unconscious on the pavement.

The City Hospital ambulance arrived within a few minutes, and the young lawyer's prostrate form was conveyed away. Surgeons accompanying the vehicle, gave him a restorative which soon revived the sufferer. He was sufficiently aroused to learn that he had been wounded by a pistol shot. Regaining rapid control of his senses, he gave his name, and requested that his newspaper friend, Cragg, be summoned to the hospital at once. By the time that the ambulance reached its destination, the office was crowded with reporters.

"Townbridge shot by an assassin!" was the exclamation that passed from one member of the Fourth Estate to another. A mid-

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night extra told the news over the City, and the telegraph wires throughout the State were converted into melting pots with messages of the tragedy. This new sensation, added another color and phase to the great dilemma, which was occupying the minds of the public. It served as a storm of protest in behalf of the young lawyer. He had dared to expose graft, greed and distinguished men! The attempt upon his life, created thousands of sympathizers, who had been inimical to his adventure.

Cragg dressed hurriedly and made his way speedily to the hospital. He held an interview with Townbridge, who gave directions as to what should be done as to the check evidence, in event that he, Townbridge, should be unable to attend the investigation at its next session. He gave Cragg his office and apartment keys, telling him that he would find the notices signed by the Governor at his place of abode. Cragg was

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also assigned to the task of securing a small hand-grip from the office, which contained additional documentary evidence.

“Extra! Jack Townbridge killed!” was being yelled vociferously by the newsies on the streets. These enterprising young vendors, eager to sell their wares and pile up their incomes, had murdered our hero viva voce. The news spread with electric like rapidity throughout the City.

It is no uncommon occurrence, for newsboys to stretch the truth in order to induce the public to buy. They often congregate in the streets and decide what cries shall issue from their throats, in order to gull the public. Sales are their trade, and they go far in pursuing their methods. Who can blame the little rascals? They do no harm. Their lives are heroic. They experience one continuous struggle every moment of their service. Especially, is this true in large cities. Who can condemn these urchins

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who are smart enough to bunco grownups? We enjoy being mulcted, in their innocent manner, by the newsies. We love the sensation, the happiness and pleasure that it gives us.

Despite the elasticity given to the truth of the story, it was real live news, anent a burning public issue. Thousands of people crept from their beds to purchase papers. Great satisfaction was expressed, when it was learned that Townbridge, was not only not dead, but not seriously injured.

One can imagine Cragg's surprise upon entering his friend's office, to find that all papers had been ransacked, but the hand-grip remained untouched. The notices were undisturbed, and were safe behind lock and key in Townbridge's room.

Charlotte Beverly was among the multitude who ventured into the open to purchase a mid-night extra. Upon hearing the newsboys' cries, in which the young champion's

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name figured, she became alarmed. She almost allowed herself to become hysterical, but became composed enough to learn the truth. Her anxiety however, was unabated. Bright and early the next morning, after a night of sleeplessness and agitation, she was one of the first to go to the bedside of the young man, who was the object of her admiration. A large bouquet of red roses, his favorite flower, was carried to him.

Upon entering the room where he was located, Townbridge extended his left hand and remarked, as calmly as if nothing had happened, "I am most agreeably surprised to see you. I appreciate this compliment, more than I am able to express."

"I pledge you sir, I am greatly pleased to learn that your injuries are not as serious as I feared. Who committed this outrage?"

"Certainly none of my friends. I am at a loss to know. As yet the party has not

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been apprehended. He eluded the crowd after him, and all traces have been lost for the present."

"I fear, lest some awful harm will come to you before this probe has been cleared up and been completed." Charlotte made this statement, with what Townbridge thought he detected, a feeling of attachment for him. He took her hand, and pressed it for some little time. She offered no resistance.

Charlotte's breast heaved under this first expression of affection upon the young lawyer's part. She was impulsed with ecstasy, and Townbridge could not restrain himself from imprinting a kiss upon her wrist. Now, she was satisfied that he did care for her. She was happy. The young woman was unable to conceal her emotion. Looking into each other's eyes, they understood. Words were unnecessary.

"I must be going Mr. Townbridge. How long before you will get out? I hope, real soon."

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"I will reach the Captiol this morning at the appointed hour. The investigation will not be delayed one moment on my account," he responded quickly.

"Why, you must not attempt such today, Mr.——!" "Jack," he interrupted before she completed the sentence. She was joyous. "Just call me Jack. It will set well coming from you."


Glad of this opportunity, she agreed to call him by his first name, if he would meet her upon an equal footing and address her, "Charlotte." A contract, was then and there entered into in that respect.

She did not make known to him, that she would attend the probe that day. NOTHING ON EARTH could have prevented. With another hearty handshake she left him. The young reformer, felt a thrill of new life pass over him. Charlotte Beverly had come into his career. This gave him new vigor and added strength, as well as

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more self reliance. Speaking in the vernacular, she was "game." This trait, he admired.

CHAPTER XXVII.

URRAH for Townbridge! Three cheers for Townbridge!" The welkin crashed with yells, as the young man stepped from an auto-car at the Capitol entrance. A dense crowd had collected about the State House. He was easily the hero of the day. Men and women, young and old, had left their places of business and homes to attend the next session of the investigation. Young men greatly outnumbered their elders in the throng. They had taken up the young lawyer's cause as their own, and had hailed him on all sides as their leader.

Officials and clerks at the Capitol, rushed from their desks to learn the cause of the commotion and tumultuous shouting. Townbridge seemed not to heed the ovations

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tendered to him. He had sighted Charlotte standing on the topmost step leading into the entrance of the State House. He saw no one else. Making directly for her, he clasped her hands in welcome. Great tears of joy welled up in her large deep eyes.

Townbridge, after a few words, proceeded to the House of Representatives. His right arm in a sling, his appearance on the floor created a muffled exchange of remarks and comments among the members, as he strode in a dignified manner down the aisle leading to the table where he sat the day before. Being seated, a deathlike silence gripped the room, and the proceedings were resumed.

Like a clap of thunder out of a gloomy sky, the Chairman read the notices to produce the checks and bank records, and asked if the cashiers were present with the required documentary evidence. The ten guilty members paled under the announce-

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ment. Fright seized them! Some almost collapsed!

Instantly, the leaders for the opposition sprang to their feet, and made vigorous objection to introduction of this evidence, on the grounds that if material, production of same should have been authorized by the Committee. Parliamentary tactics and debate followed along this line for several hours. Every manner of filibustering known to legislators was brought to bear. But the Chairman declared all motions, tending to exclude this form of evidence out of order, as the notices to produce, bore the Governor's signature. An appeal was taken from his decision, and for awhile, it seemed that the objecting legislators would triumph. Lengthy speeches were delivered pro and con, but finally the question of appeal from the Chairman's decision came to a vote, and he was sustained by a substantial majority.

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Reading Blackman's check issued to Representative James, produced a dramatic effect! The former's signature was identified by the cashier of the Eastern National Bank. The endorsement of the latter, by the Clerk of the House of Representatives. In rapid succession, the checks made payable to the other ten representatives under fire went through the same process. Pandemonium reigned in the gallery! Shouts of victory for Townbridge were heard in every direction! Even the partisan members forgot themselves, and indulged in the disorder.

Standing in the gallery, and waving her handkerchief wildly, was Miss Beverly! She was so exultant over the results, that she yelled at the top of her voice. The young lawyer was electrified by her enthusiasm and loyalty, and a broad smile spread across his face. Considerable time was consumed by the Chairman in restoring quiet.

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All evidence having been introduced, action was immediately taken. The eleven guilty members were expelled after a hard fight. Within three days, the Act, created from the medical bill, was repealed. A resolution was also adopted, calling the attention of the County Prosecutor to the bribers, and demanding that they be punished.

CHAPTER XXVIII.



prominent family was thrown into sudden turmoil by a Deputy Sheriff appearing at the palatial home with a warrant for the father's and husband's arrest! He, with twelve others, had been indicted. Bonds for appearance for trial were assessed at \$10,000 each. They were to appear before the State's Court to answer to the charges of bribery and treason! This shock added to the family's distress.

"My God, what will be the end of this!" cried Dr. Blackman as the Court officer displayed the warrant. Already, the members of his family had learned of the true bills. The distinguished physician was then under arrest! He requested the officer to allow him a few minutes, to prepare to go to the Sheriff's office to perfect bond. This was granted.

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The discharge from a revolver, threw the household and Deputy into consternation! The report issued from a bath room upstairs. Mother and daughter screamed, and ran to the second floor, they being preceded by the officer! A man's form, in the last throes of death, lay gasping for breath on the floor. That person was the Doctor! The women fainted, and were left in charge of family servants. The paper in possession of the Deputy Sheriff, proved the physician's DEATH WARRANT!

Vaunted ambition and desired power, had effected the undoing of entire families! Corruption, bribery and chicanery, had caused DEATH to stalk through a well-known and happy home. A lobbyist and a legislator, had fled the State for parts unknown. Ten legislators, were serving time in the penitentiary. A GREAT STATE, had bowed her head in shame. Pollution, had been about its dirty work. G O L D !

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GOLD ! GLITTERING GOLD, had allured victims within its grasp, and had destroyed lives that might have continued nobly !

A YOUNG MAN, amidst all this carnage and destruction, by his pure motives, had emblazoned his name high upon the roll of honor. He had lived a quarter of a century within a few months. Great lines of sorrow clouded his brow. He was unhappy, by reason of the course of events, but his conscience was clear as crystal. He had followed his own outlined path of duty, and that, no one, could gainsay.

The commonwealth, once more being given a clean slate, the young attorney returned to his practice, which now had its brightest prospects and outlook. But he was not long to remain away from the public eye.

The mayoralty race in his city was buzzing. A number of candidates had announced their entry. Within a few days, to Town-

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bridge's surprise, he read in great headlines in the morning paper, that one hundred young men from all walks of life, had pitched him into the contest without his knowledge or consent.

Raymond had quietly secured a petition, signed by himself and ninety-nine others, asking Townbridge to run for the office. They termed him the "YOUNG MEN'S LEADER." Raymond headed the list. At ten o'clock that day, practically the entire number marched in a body to Townbridge's office, and demanded, that he take up their banner, and fly it to victory. Raymond was spokesman for the crowd.

"Gentlemen," answered the young lawyer, "I feel greatly flattered. We are aware of the corrupt and petty political practices in this great city. But I am young. Moreover, I have no money with which to wage a campaign. You know, that legitimate expenses are mandatory and necessary in this big

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metropolis. No unclean money, shall enter into anything with which I am associated. I wish to pay my own fare. Gentlemen, I most respectfully decline!"

"But sir, we will raise the money among your admirers and supporters," declared Raymond.

"Another consideration. Politics is a losing game financially, when a man is honest. I desire first, a more lucrative law practice than I now possess. I prefer applying myself to my profession for several years before entering into any other field. Mr. Raymond, I will support you, or any other qualified young man for the mayorship. We must clean out the City Hall! Who will take the bit in his teeth? I am ready to fight for, and with him. Gentlemen, choose your candidate, other than myself!" Townbridge, after thus expressing himself, was silent. The delegation was determined, that the man whom they had

CHAPTER XXIX.

QFTENTIMES during the course of human events, two women, in their likes and dislikes, may widely differ. TIME'S scythe changes many conditions, and many persons. Herein were two women of excellent qualities, and neither were acquainted. The identical man, was the central object of two antithetical thoughts, issuing from two separate and distinct minds. One loved and admired. The other despised and hated. One was buoyant with joy and aspirations—the other dejected by sorrow and crushed spirit. Both were innocent.

Twelve months prior to the great scandal and tragedy, these women were unconscious of the other's existence and identity. FATE had played its part again! The women had

THE STATE'S SCANDAL

exchanged places in our young hero's life. Forsooth it to say, Charlotte Beverly and John Townbridge had plighted themselves in nuptial troth.

"The field is against Townbridge, but he is a winner! Every political trick used by dirty politicians, will be played in this contest. But we wish to call the attention of our champion's enemies to one truth, that stands out boldly and defiantly. This is a fight, by the law abiding citizens, against the professional, grafting and log-rolling Ring of this City!" This statement was issued through the press by Raymond and Cragg, joint managers of Townbridge's campaign.

Voters rallied to the standard of the young men of the Municipality, and Townbridge was elected over his opponents by a handsome plurality. THE PEOPLE believed in the younger men. They were de-

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sirous of a new broom at the City Hall, and it was given to them.

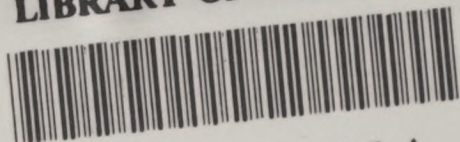
A new day began in the East. Gladness swept over the entire City the night of the election. Clean men, were to soon take hold of the reins of the City government. The State had been cleansed of its vipers by the efforts of Jack Townbridge, and he was now ready to purge the Capital City of its filth!

When the setting sun lowered itself below the western horizon, the young lawyer and leader, stood watching the clear sky, as it was pierced by the softening rays emitted from Nature's greatest element of fire. His left arm rested upon Charlotte Beverly's shoulder. All was peaceful and serene, after several months of war. Within a few weeks, she was the First Lady of The City.

TOWNBRIDGE, the "YOUNG MAN IN THE GRAY COAT," was a man of DESTINY!

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